

Red China Impressions Given By NEA Reporter

By JOHN STROHM

NEW YORK (NEA) — What of the Red Chinese attitude toward John Strohm, the only American correspondent with both U.S. and Chinese permission to travel in China?

Amazement, first. For here was the mortal enemy they were ranting about, calmly taking pictures of their steel plants, their farms and their militia.

Curiosity, too. I was a crowd-stopper wherever I went. I must say that my ego dropped when I found that one group of school children who stood up and clapped their hands when I entered the classroom thought I was a Russian!

In a few spots the searing blast of hatred continually directed toward our country leaked at me personally. A cartoon of protest was drawn of me and placed in my hired automobile.

Once while I was being shown through a farm implement repair shop by the vice-director of one of the new communes, a belligerent worker pushed toward me and shouted, "Get out! Get out!"

On another occasion I was surrounded and jostled by students who were serving the state by running a small blast furnace.

Scarcely anyone, once my identity as an American was established, missed an opportunity to lecture me severely about American imperialism and the validity of Red China's aims. An engineer claimed he once had seen U.S. soldiers rape girls in Peiping. In Shanghai, I was conducted through a street memorable as the scene where a drunken GI allegedly killed a pedicab driver.

"This is not a happy time for you to be here," was the understatement of a factory manager in Nanking.

My interpreter, who had translated a hundred lectures to me and must have been as tired as I of the propaganda monotone, consoled me in these words:

"You're the only American most of them have ever met. It's your chance to tell you what they think."

What is it like to be an American in a hostile land at a time like the Quemoy crisis? One moves in a constant bath of virulent propaganda, from the official radio to the street rallies in the old folks home.

To those who seem to possess some power to reason, you keep up a stiff counter-battery of patient argument. But when day is over the mind is exhausted and the spirit flags, even though you know one man cannot expect to offset massive Communist "re-education" and thought control.

The healing balm of honest resentment is a luxury one can enjoy only to a limited extent. Mainly one feels sorrow for the poor Chinese, whose streets, homes, shops and bodies have been cleaned up miraculously while, at the same time, their minds have been blackened by hatred and distortion.

Is there anywhere a few drops of good will for America? Many Chinese assured me that they were quite fond of the American people and wanted to be friends but that John Foster Dulles was preventing Americans from getting the truth about China.

I would be less than truthful if I failed to say that the vast majority of the Chinese I met — even against the hateful obligato of the propaganda — were most helpful to me personally. They were courteous and far less evasive than the Russians on my visits to the USSR.

The International Tourist Bureau, a government agency that handles all foreign visitors, made every arrangement I requested, took me everywhere I asked to go. While traveling in the rural areas, I would spot farmers working in the fields and tell the driver, "Stop!"

The interpreter and I would have a visit with the farmers then move on, often stopping unannounced at an agricultural college or hospital. Many of the impromptu conversations which resulted became spirited give and take. I pulled no punches in relating charges against the U.S. but the debates produced no winners.

As in my visit to the Soviet Union this summer I raised the point: "But war is so terrible today that there can be no victors and so there will be no war."

I found that this did not go over as well in Red China as it did in Russia because the Chinese seem to have a fatalistic acceptance that if war results from their effort to take what they believe rightfully belongs to China, then war it must be and the U.S. will be at fault.

Party Chairman Mao has said that China is the only nation that can afford a war: "We can lose 300 million Chinese and still have 300 million left."

A diplomat has reported a grim conversation with Mao in which the party leader said: "World War II set up socialism in Russia. World War III set up socialism in the peoples' democracies of Europe and China. World War III might see the death of capitalism and the triumph of socialism."

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around the world." How does one evaluate such statements as these? I only know this for sure: all this war spirit is getting a fantastic surge of production out of the Chinese workers, known officially as "the great leap forward in agriculture and industry."

In one rural commune they had set up 5,000 tiny blast furnaces to make pig iron, promised another 5,000 by the end of October as their answer to American "aggression."

A letter by a worker in a truck factory said, "We'll crush American aggressors beneath the wheels of our trucks."

Fukien province farmers, close to the zuns traiped at Quemoy, adopted the slogan, "More grain to support the front; heavy blows to beat the U.S. wolves."

Another reaction reported in the press: "Five million tons of manure were transported in one evening's effort."

When I visited the big open-cut coal mine in Fushan the secretary told me the workers were so upset they had voted to create "20 sputniks" — 20 new types of machinery to make for more efficient

production. During the past month most factories and communes have organized militia units. I saw them drilling with rifles or wooden sticks. They were, these amateurs asserted, ready to march out and repel the U.S. Marines who were going to land any day now on the Chinese mainland "just as they did in Lebanon."

"But what makes you think America has any idea of attacking China?" I would ask. And they would come back with Chiang's statements that he would lead his army back to the mainland and quote American admirals as boasting that the U.S. was backing up the Formosa government with "the greatest striking power in history."

But sometimes they are disdainful of American strength. "When America talks so much of its power," a Hankow steel official told me gravely, "it is really a sign of American weakness."

When I tried to talk back to this sort of thing by saying "America never started a war. Why should it now?" they would come back with a knowing smile: "And what about Korea?"

For many Chinese are persuaded that the U.S. started the war in Korea, just as they are sure that the Chinese Volunteers won it. "The American people are afraid that the Communists want to force their form of government on the rest of the world," I argued. Again the smile. "Ridiculous. Lenin himself said communism cannot be exported."

Only rarely did I encounter flashes of the Chinese humor which once was so endearing. Once in protesting that I did not believe there would be a war or I would

not be traveling in China, I pulled out a photograph of my wife and six children.

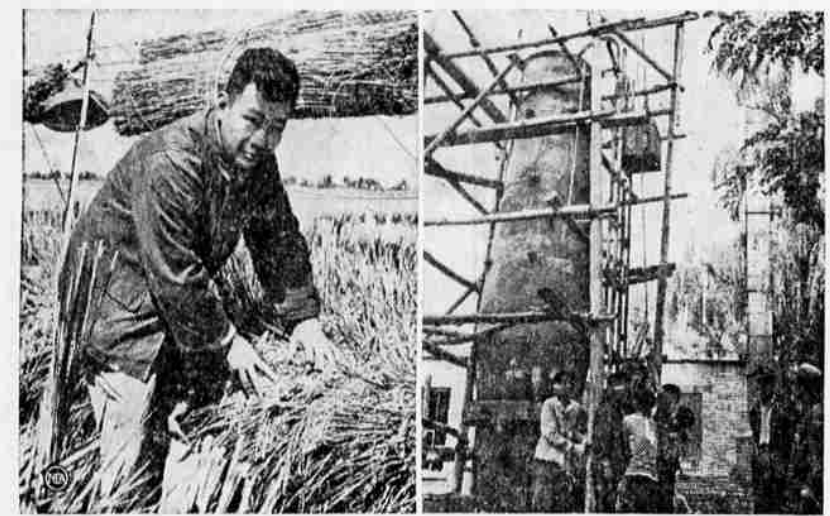
"Ohoh," smiled a factory manager, "so you are a sputnik father." Sputnik is the Chinese label given to anyone who overfulfills the production plan.

EXCELLENT RETRIEVER

PORT WASHINGTON, Wis. (UPI) — John Jushka said the first day of retriever training for his Irish setter, Red, brought some astounding results. Jushka said Red brought him a wallet containing \$50. Jushka returned it to Tom Bruders of Belgium, Wis., who had lost it.



AMAZEMENT AND CURIOSITY freeze the faces of these Red Chinese youngsters in Canton as they watch Strohm—the first American they have ever seen—record expressions on film.



"MORE GRAIN to support the front" is promise of farmers like this one. MORE STEEL is promise of these workers at tiny new blast furnace near Tientsin.



"READY TO REPEL U.S. MARINES," this is a member of newly-organized militia unit in a commune outside Shanghai. Like others, he believes U.S. is ready to land in Red China.



ANTI-U.S. ANTAGONISM clouds faces of these chemical factory workers outside Nanking as they discover the picture — taking foreigner is an American. Poster blasts U.S.A., too.

RC Council Holds Meet

Members of the Southern Oregon Red Cross Hospital Council met in Klamath Falls October 15 to plan service to Camp White Veterans Domiciliary during the coming season.

Mrs. Richard B. Maxwell, vice chairman of the council, was in charge of the program which included a review of the September 15 disaster drill conducted by the local Red Cross-Civil Defense organization and included plans for mutual aid from Jackson County. Otto L. Smith, local disaster chairman, Mrs. Winston Purvine, staff aide, chairman, and Mrs. Charles Dakin, who was in charge of the mass feeding program reported and the group viewed a series of pictures taken during the operation. Mrs. Edith Eden, Jackson County Red Cross disaster vice chairman, reported on planning and preparations made in their chapter to cooperate with Klamath County during the disaster drill.

Frank Glomming, service officer for Camp White, reported on needs for volunteer supplies for the domiciliary. Mrs. H. A. Moore, hospital chairman for the local chapter requests that any group willing to contribute laundry bags, algalms, or table games contact her through the local chapter office. The Klamath Basin chapter pledged funds to cover cost of refreshments for veterans at two entertainments planned this year by Red Cross Gray Ladies serving the veterans at the domiciliary. The next meeting of the council will be held in Medford December 5.

Sample Ballots Available Now

A sizable stack of sample ballots, listing candidates and issues as they will appear on official election ballots November 4, rests on a counter in the county clerk's office.

Clerk Charley Delap again reminded voters that they are welcome to come in and take samples. The ballots represent both in-city and out-of-city precincts.

Meanwhile, Delap said, 111 absentee ballots have been issued thus far for persons who expect to be absent or unable to go to polls on election day.



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